

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-12 SOE-02 AF-10 ARA-10
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2297
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AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 11949

USSALTTWO

E.O.11652:GDS
TAGS:PARM, UNGA, UR
SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF GROMYKO'S SPEECH TO SSOD

REF: USUN 2158 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY. REFTEL PROVIDES EXCELLENT SUMMARY OF GROMYKO'S
SSOD SPEECH AND EMBASSY OFFERS BRIEF ANALYSIS OF MORE
INTERESTING ASPECTS OF GROMYKO'S PRESENTATION. END
SUMMARY.

1. OVERALL SPEECH WAS MODERATE IN TONE, AND EVEN WHEN HE
WAS SCORING POLEMICAL POINTS (AS ON THE NEUTRON WEAPON),
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GROMYKO DID SO WITH RELATIVE RESTRAINT. EVIDENTLY THE
DECISION WAS MADE NOT TO AGGRAVATE SOVIET-U.S. RELATIONS
IN THIS FORUM AND GROMYKO KEPT THE TONE NOTABLY HIGHER
THAN THE SOVIET PRESS HAS RECENTLY. SINCE HE IS ALSO IN
THE U.S. FOR SUBSTANTIVE TALKS ON SALT, GROMYKO PROBABLY
DID NOT WISH TO MUDDY THE WATERS WITH A STRONG ATTACK ON
THE U.S.

2. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE SOVIET POSITION AT THE SSOD WAS DELIVERED A MONTH AGO BY BREZHNEV IN HIS SPEECH TO THE KOMSOMOLS AND GROMYKO'S ASSIGNED TASK WAS TO CONVEY THIS PROGRAM IN A STATESMAN-LIKE TONE IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE MOSCOW'S SERIOUSNESS IN THE QUESTION OF DISARMAMENT. GROMYKO'S TESTY COMMENTS ON THE SS-20 AND ARMS CONTROL AS OPPOSED TO DISARMAMENT APPEAR TO BE LAST-MINUTE ADDITIONS INTENDED TO RESPOND TO VICE-PRESIDENT MONDALE'S SPEECH AND, AS SUCH, GENERATE MORE HEAT THAN LIGHT. THE REST OF THE SPEECH (WHICH IS PRESUMABLY WHAT GROMYKO BROUGHT WITH HIM) IS CALCULATED TO CONVEY AN IMPRESSION OF MODERATION, PATIENCE, AND SERIOUSNESS.

3. CLEARLY THE CENTRAL ASPECT OF THE SOVIET PROPOSALS IS THAT OF THE CESSATION OF PRODUCTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND THE GRADUAL ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS' STOCKPILES. WE WERE STRUCK BY THE APPARENT INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN GROMYKO'S SPEECH, WHICH INSISTED ZHAT ALL NUCLEAR POWERS MUST PARTICIPATE IN NEGOTIATIONS TO THIS END, AND THE ACCOMPANYING SOVIET PAPER ON "PRACTICAL WAYS TO END THE ARMS RACE" SUBMITTED BY THE SOVIET DELEGATION (REFTEL), WHICH SUGGESTS THAT NOT ALL NUCLEAR WEAPONS STATES NEED BE INVOLVED IN THIS PROCESS FROM THE OUTSET. IF THE SOVIETS ARE IN ANY WAY SERIOUS ABOUT THIS PROPOSAL, THEY KNOW THAT THEY WILL HAVE TO SHOW CONSIDERABLE FLEXIBILITY
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IN ORDER TO ACCOUNT FOR THE POSITIONS OF FRANCE AND CHINA.

4. OTHER POINTS WHICH WE FIND NOTABLE IN GROMYKO'S SPEECH INCLUDE:

-- HIS POSITIVE ASSESSMENT OF SALT AND HIS INSISTENCE THAT "IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE SIGNING" OF A SALT-II AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS COULD BEGIN ON SERIOUS REDUCTIONS IN STRATEGIC ARMS AND ON FURTHER QUALITATIVE LIMITATIONS;

-- THE QUALIFICATION PLACED ON SOVIET ADHERENCE TO PROTOCOL II OF THE TREATY OF TLATELOLCO, WHICH PRESUMABLY IS INTENDED TO REFER TO THE SOVIET POSITION ON TRANSIT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS MADE IN THE STATEMENT PUBLISHED ON MAY 19 ON ACCOMPANYING THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SOVIET INTENTION N TO SIGN PROTOCOL II;

-- GROMYKO'S PROPOSAL THAT MILITARY BUDGETS BE REDUCED NOT IN PERCENTAGE BUT IN ABSOLUTE FIGURES: UNDOUBTEDLY THE SOVIETS WILL ELABORATE ON THIS IN COMING WEEKS;

-- THE SOVIET DEFINITION OF THE SCOPE OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS TALKS (OR "CONSULTATIONS" AS GROMYKO DEFINES THEM)

LEAVES OPEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE WEAPONS TO SELF-
DEFINED VICTIMS OF AGGRESSION AND LIBERATION MOVEMENTS;
AND
-- GROMYKO'S OBVIOUS SENSITIVITY TO ANY CHANGES IN
DISARMAMENT MACHINERY. MATLOCK

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